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ABSTRACT

This fastback notes that finding solutions to problems of illiteracy and other learning difficulties means, for some middle-school teachers, adopting a multiple intelligences approach to instruction. After an introduction, the first section of the fastback discusses brain-based theories of learning, thinking styles, and learning and reading styles. The second section presents the principles of multiple intelligences theory. The third section discusses multiple intelligences and middle school reading strategies, such as combating reading complacency, using narrative texts in transitional reading, and engaging students' interests through reading in the content areas. The fastback concludes that the successful middle school reading program will offer a multiple intelligences curriculum so that all students are taught through their preferred learning style to become lifelong readers and learners. Contains 23 references. (RS)

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Using Multiple Intelligences in Middle School Reading

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Louisa Melton

Winston Pickett

Louisa Melton is a teacher at Oakland Elementary School in the Henry County School District in Georgia. Previously she worked on several newspapers and was a part-time journalism teacher at Gordon College in Barnesville, Georgia. Melton holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in speech education from Valdosta University and a master of education degree in reading from State University of West Georgia.

Winston Pickett is an associate professor at State University of West Georgia. Previously he worked as a teacher, principal, educational consultant, and superintendent of schools. Pickett hold a B.S. from David Lipscomb University, an M.A. and an Ed.S. from Tennessee Technological University, and an Ed.D. from East Tennessee State University.

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by
Louisa Melton
and
Winston Pickett

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Introduction

Reading is a basic communication skill in today's world. The ability to read and understand written communication is not a luxury but a necessity for survival. The skills required for deriving meaning from the printed word begin the day a child is born. Moment by moment a child's senses are stimulated through sight, sound, and touch; and all that is perceived becomes a part of a learning base. This base is where the necessary skills for learning to read begin.

Most students entering kindergarten do so with excitement and enthusiasm. Learning to read offers a powerful motivation for coming to school. Why then do so many students leave school with underdeveloped reading skills? And why do others, who are capable readers, choose not to read? What creates this change in attitude? Perhaps the answer can be found in our teaching methods.

In American society we prize the individual. We embrace the philosophy that each individual is unique and possesses individual talents and abilities. However, in a standardized education system, many teachers embrace a philosophy that each student must learn to read through an established procedure that primarily in-

volves word recognition. These teachers apparently do not recognize that students must learn through all of their senses, not merely the visual. When teachers teach through this restricted view, they require students to conform to one method of learning. However, the teachers should adjust their teaching to meet each student's unique talents and abilities. These teachers' limited view of reading instruction, in turn, limits students' potentials for learning.

The traditional, standardized education system views learning as purely cognitive. Traditional methods are structured to teach students reading and writing through a set of visual processes. While this method works well with visual learners, it is a dismal failure with students who learn more effectively through other methods, such as language, touch, logic, music, and group interaction. These other students find little importance in what is being taught because they find it difficult to learn. Often these students are left behind and eventually are lost not only to the education system, but also to a lifetime of learning.

Finding solutions to problems of illiteracy and other learning difficulties means examining how we teach. For many teachers, this will mean changing current practices in order to adopt a multiple intelligences (MI) approach to instruction. This approach uses various strategies that guide students through multiple ways of learning. This approach also means that teachers must embrace a belief that learning does not involve simply acquiring a set body of facts but, rather, is a process that continues throughout life.

Research and the Need for Change

Research involving learning and teaching philosophies that has received the most emphasis in education publications over the past 15 years includes brain-based theories of learning, thinking styles, and learning and reading styles. Each of these philosophies states the need for changes in our curricula and teaching strategies to better address individual learning needs. Although curricula based on these philosophies vary, an instructional strategy that can meet the demands for change embodied in these philosophies is multiple intelligences theory, as described by Howard Gardner (1983). Gardner identifies seven intelligences:

1. Verbal/Linguistic: Intelligence of words. Examples: reading, writing, analyzing, organizing.
2. Logical/Mathematical: Intelligence of numbers and reasoning. Examples: strategies, games, science, problem solving.
3. Visual/Spatial: Intelligence of pictures and images. Examples: diagrams, charts, schemata.

4. Bodily/Kinesthetic: Intelligence of moving the body and manipulating objects. Examples: building models, dramatizing events.
5. Musical: Intelligence of tone, rhyme, and timbre. Examples: composition, singing, learning in rhythmical ways.
6. Interpersonal: Intelligence of social understanding. Examples: clubs, group projects, cooperative learning.
7. Intrapersonal; Intelligence of self-knowledge. Examples: diaries, meditation, self-esteem, research, reflection.

Brain-Based Theories of Learning

Brain-based theories of learning can be summarized in 12 principles, described by Caine and Caine (1990, pp. 66-70):

1. The brain is a parallel processor.
2. Learning engages the entire physiology.
3. The search for meaning is innate for the brain.
4. Meaning is gathered by patterning information together.
5. Emotions are critical to patterning.
6. Brains perceive and create parts and wholes.
7. Learning comes from a combination of focused and peripheral perception.
8. Learning involves conscious and unconscious processes.
9. We have both spatial and rote memory.

10. Understanding comes from both internal and external interaction.
11. Learning comes about best when we are challenged but not threatened.
12. Each brain is unique in learning style and ability.

Brain-based learning theory challenges many of the basic assumptions of traditional teaching because it posits that there is no one method or teaching technique that can meet the needs of all the variations of the human brain. This concept is mirrored in the MI theory. Thus a multiple intelligences approach to instruction offers teachers a frame of reference that allows them to select from the vast array of instructional methods. Instructional strategies based on MI theory help teachers become multifaceted in order to allow all students to learn through their visual, tactile, emotional, or auditory preferences. By so doing, learning becomes active and meaningful to most students.

Thinking Styles

Similarly, a thinking-styles philosophy of learning describes the style by which a student chooses to acquire information and, indeed, to function in daily life. Of course, the students who are most successful are often the most flexible, choosing a thinking style that meets the needs of each learning situation. Thinking-styles theory describes the functions, scope, and forms of thinking. Sternberg (1990, pp. 363-71) casts these three aspects as follows.

- *Functions* (how students think):
  Legislative: creating, formulating, imagining, planning. Students who think legislatively like to create their own rules and enjoy dealing with problems that lack structure.
  Executive: implementing, doing. Students who are executive thinkers like to follow rules, be told what to do, stick to familiar approaches, work with structured problems, and recall facts.
  Judicial: judging, evaluating, comparing. Students who are judicial thinkers like to evaluate facts, procedures, and rules; write critiques; give opinions; judge things and people; and evaluate solutions or ideas.

- *Scope* (how students attack problems):
  Internal: Students work independently.
  External: Students work in groups.

- *Forms* (how students solve problems):
  Monarchic: single way of doing something predominates.
  Hierarchic: multiple goals, each having a different priority.
  Oligarchic: multiple goals of equal importance.
  Anarchic: random approaches.

The figure on the next page links these features of thinking style to the seven intelligences of MI theory.

Figure 1. The relationships of thinking styles and the seven intelligences.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE	THINKING STYLES								
	Functions			*Scope*		*Forms*			
	Legislative	Executive	Judicial	Internal	External	Monarchic	Hierarchic	Oligarchic	Anarchic
Linguistic	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Visual/Spacial	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Musical				■	■				
Mathematical/Logical		■	■			■	■	■	■
Bodily/Kinesthetic				■	■				
Interpersonal	■	■	■		■		■	■	■
Intrapersonal	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■

Teachers tend to teach and test through assignments that reflect their own preferred thinking style. A curriculum based on MI theory allows a teacher to expand his or her style repertoire to meet the needs of more students. It also helps teachers not to confuse a student's learning style with his or her ability to learn. Styles are independent from ability; but, unfortunately, most schools do not reward all styles equally.

Instruction based on MI theory also encourages and assists students to develop the ability to move from one style to another. In life, thinking styles are changeable, not fixed, in spite of the fact that conventional teaching tends to reward styles that work in the classroom but not necessarily in other parts of life. A curriculum based on MI theory helps students to acquire meaningful skills that are relevant in school and outside school and that can be transferred to new situations.

Learning and Reading Styles

A learning style is the method that an individual uses, when given a choice, to learn new information. Learning styles usually are labeled as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. Barbe (1985) characterizes learner styles as follows:

- *Visual learners* learn through watching, reading, and taking notes. They gravitate toward reading, watching television, doing artwork, and writing. They tend to enjoy silent reading and studying alone. They show their emotions through facial expressions.

- *Auditory learners* learn through listening, verbal participation, and music. They seem to talk a lot, enjoy reading aloud or moving their lips in silent reading, and count aloud when doing math problems. They work best in group situations and show their emotions in their voices.
- *Kinesthetic learners* learn through hands-on, active participation. They like to be first — or last — in line and cannot wait to move. They gravitate toward sports and handwork. When doing math problems, they often count on fingers or by using objects. They tend to work best alone with frequent activity breaks, and they show emotions through body stance or actions, such as fist clenching or hitting when angry.

Conventional, standardized instruction gives little consideration to the individuality of each student as expressed through a preferred learning method. Yet one of the most important areas affected by learning styles is reading. Marie Carbo has provided numerous studies that identify the complementary roles of reading and learning styles. A consistent message of this research is that a student will learn to read best when he or she is allowed to learn through his or her own style (Carbo 1983).

A reading program designed to implement MI theory allows students to learn to read in a way that makes the skill meaningful to them and in a way that matches how they learn best. There are clear matches between learning styles and the seven intelligences of MI theo-

ry. A visual learner, for example, can be taught through instruction that uses musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and linguistic approaches. An auditory learner can be taught through instruction that uses linguistic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal instruction. And a kinesthetic learner can be taught using all seven intelligences.

Education research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s has demonstrated that many traditional, standardized notions about learning and human potential are flawed because they focus on single dimensions. Early notions about intelligence are a simple example. Educators once believed that a person's intelligence was more or less set at birth, by heredity, and could be assessed through tests that yielded a quantifiable "intelligence quotient." This IQ described the individual's intellectual capability. However, this idea of a fixed potential did not take into account the individual's background and experiences, which affect the development of each person's capacities. Modern research has shown that intelligence is flexible, a capability that can be enhanced, expanded, and changed throughout one's life. Intelligence is now viewed as multidimensional. In much the same way, we now understand that teaching, too, must be multidimensional. There are many ways that individuals learn, process, and show information. (For additional information about multiple intelligences and instruction, readers may wish to consult fastback 342 *Teaching for Multiple Intelligences* by David G. Lazear.)

Principles of Multiple Intelligences Theory

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was first stated in his book, *Frames of Mind* (1983). In that book he tells how educators' dependence on scores from cognitive tests are used to predict success for all students. He then points out how narrow this range is in real-life situations. Gardner cites three case studies as examples. In these studies, three students are taught skills needed for success in navigation, mastering a foreign language, or computer programming combined with a musical arrangement produced on a synthesizer. Each of the students involved in these cases attains a high level of competence in his or her area and therefore should be viewed as showing intelligent behavior. However, their achievements may not be given credit with our current methods of instruction, because our traditional views of success are based on cognitive success and do not include a proficiency in music, navigation, or communication skills.

Gardner believes that the only way to change our gauge of success and to encourage each student to reach his or her personal level of excellence is to expand and

to reformulate our views of what counts as human intellect. Gardner's answer to more appropriate methods of assessment also was described in this new curriculum approach.

MI theory states that all individuals have unique experiences and talents that allow them to gather meaning from information that is presented to them. If the information is presented in a way that matches the individual's talents and experiences, then that information will become a part of the individual's life to be used over and over whenever it is needed. Gardner grouped these talents and experiences into seven "intelligences," which we listed previously (see pages 9-10).

The idea of teaching through the use of multiple intelligences is simple: Every curriculum should link instruction to the seven intelligences. Rather than singling out a specific intelligence, such as the verbal intelligence, and conveying instruction in that manner, teachers should endeavor to provide instruction through words, numbers or logic, pictures, music, the body, social interaction, and personal experiences. The rationale for teaching through multiple intelligences is that no one method or technique alone can adequately address the differences in human learning.

Naturally, teachers also have individual learning preferences and, as a result, tend to teach their students through their own preferred method. An MI curriculum gives teachers a frame of reference that allows them to select from a vast array of instructional methods.

An MI curriculum also may help to solve some discipline problems. Why is it that certain students mis-

behave in one teacher's class but are delighted learners in another's class? The answer may lie in the teaching method. Often problem learners are created by frustration. If a teacher uses an instructional method that does not match the student's learning style, the potential for trouble exists. Frustrations arise when a match of teaching and learning styles is not achieved, and so the students pull away from learning. The solution to this academic problem can lie in teachers using a variety of teaching methods based on MI theory.

One way to develop an MI curriculum is for the teacher to begin by answering the following questions when making a lesson plan:

1. How can I use the spoken or written word?
2. How can I bring in numbers, calculations, logic, classifications, or critical thinking?
3. How can I use visual aids, visualization, color, art, metaphor, or visual organizers?
4. How can I bring in music or environmental sounds or set key points in a rhythm or melody?
5. How can I involve the whole body or hands-on experience?
6. How can I engage students in peer or cross-age sharing, cooperative learning, or large-group simulation?
7. How can I evoke personal feelings or memories or give students choices?

Readers will note that these questions echo the seven intelligences. By responding to each question, the teacher can develop a lesson plan that speaks to the variety

of learning styles that probably are present in his or her classroom.

Learning should be able to satisfy the brain's enormous curiosity and hunger for novelty, discovery, and challenge. Multiple intelligences instruction offers both learners and teachers a variety of techniques that can satisfy the quest for discovery and challenge in learning. A curriculum based on MI theory encourages students to become active learners by allowing them to gather new information and then to review how and what they learned so that they can take charge of the information and develop their own personal meanings. Learning takes place only when a student is able to take new information and connect it to existing information. An MI curriculum helps all students to make these connections through their preferred learning method, but such a curriculum also helps students to expand their personal repertoires of learning styles. Unlike in traditional teaching, where students are consumers of knowledge, students in MI teaching become producers of knowledge.

Following are some examples of activities in which students can engage using the various intelligences. This list was developed with assistance from Gail Sherer, a post-doctoral student at West Georgia College, and V. Gay Pickett, director of R.E.S.A. Migrant Education in Ellaville, Georgia.

Verbal/Linguistic:
storytelling
debating
writing (poems, myths, plays)

comparing similar novels and short stories
making class presentations
participating in discussions
keeping a journal
creating a newsletter
interviewing

Logical/Mathematical:

translating facts into a formula
developing a timeline
designing and conducting experiments
playing or creating a strategy game
writing story problems
using deductive and inductive reasoning

Visual/Spatial:

making charts, maps, graphs
developing a slide show or bulletin board
drawing posters
painting a mural
demonstrating an artistic technique
inventing a board or card game
sketching, sculpting, carving, constructing

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

acting and role playing
dancing or choreographing a dance
building a model
planning a field trip
creating an adventure game
designing a product
demonstrating a physical skill

Musical:

writing song lyrics
singing
beating out rhythms
relating music and lyrics
playing an instrument
creating a musical game
making a class presentation with musical accompaniment

Interpersonal:

developing rules for a group activity
conducting a class meeting
using a conflict management strategy
participating in cooperative learning
creating a service project

Intrapersonal:

setting goals
explaining a personal philosophy
writing rules for success
describing feelings
making a self-assessment
writing a journal, diary, or autobiographical essay

Several cautions go along with the use of an MI curriculum. The first is that no student should be pigeonholed into one particular intelligence. That defeats the purpose of the MI curriculum, which includes creating learning situations that respond to real-life situations. Students will naturally gravitate to the method of learning with which they are most comfortable. But once they

have experienced success in that way, then they will have more confidence in learning and showing their knowledge through other intelligences.

The second caution is not to overload students by offering too many choices. Moderation in the form of three of four choices in a lesson allows students sufficient choices to be successful without overwhelming them.

A third caution involves the teaching of multicultural students. When creating lessons for a classroom that includes students from diverse cultural backgrounds, teachers should be certain that the instructional approaches, activities, and expected outcomes are based on the cultural backgrounds and available knowledge of the students. Likewise, assessment methods should be within the capacity of the students, taking into account their prior knowledge. An MI curriculum can offer an excellent means of involving students who speak English as a second language in activities that communicate their knowledge in ways other than with words.

Multiple Intelligences and Middle School Reading Strategies

One of the most important areas affected by a student's preferred learning style is reading. Students learn to read best when they are allowed to learn through their preferred style. When students have not been able to do so during the elementary school years, they often arrive at middle school as poor readers.

Middle school students who are poor or disinterested readers have arrived at this point because they were not allowed to learn and practice reading in a way that helped them to establish reading as an important part of their lives. Reading, like any other skill, takes practice in order for someone to become proficient. Often poor readers have acquired many of the necessary "basic skills," but they became disenchanted with the reading process because it was an ill fit to their learning style. Thus those basics remained unpolished, making reading a chore.

Poor readers also tend to come from schools and classrooms that did not emphasize verbal skills and

from homes that do not view reading as a particularly positive trait. The poor reader in middle school usually is a student who is peer-oriented, highly tactile/kinesthetic, and a low visual/auditory learner who needs a great deal of movement while reading. An MI reading curriculum can meet the needs of these students.

An MI reading curriculum also can help students who are limited English-proficient. Many of these students lack the language skills necessary to derive meaning from the printed word. They need instruction that helps them become successful in reading English while maintaining pride in their family and cultural background. Instruction using an MI curriculum focuses on students' strengths, rather than on their weaknesses.

Two points are important to remember in middle school reading instruction. First, reading strategies differ with reading purposes. Whether scanning for main points or studying for detail, practice of each reading strategy is required for mastery. Thus flexibility is a key word for both students and teachers. Students must experience and learn to read through a variety of learning styles. Teachers must provide opportunities for students to practice various strategies and to experience different learning styles. For example, silent reading and oral reading are skills that students must use daily. These skills should be incorporated in all subject areas of the middle school curriculum.

Second, students who are allowed to select their own material, then given a chance to read silently for a period each day, develop reading skills more quickly than those who are given only assigned reading. The power

to choose what one reads makes for the best reading program. Teachers also can model the importance of reading by reading silently along with students during a daily free-reading period.

Classrooms that are saturated with high-interest books significantly improve low-achieving students' attitudes toward school and reading. Conditions that promote an enthusiasm for reading include availability of books and magazines, adults and peers who model reading, sharing and discussing books, involvement of both fiction and nonfiction books in subject instruction, and freedom of choice of reading material.

Following are examples of active lessons designed to address three specific problems that are common in middle school reading: 1) combating reading complacency, 2) using narrative texts in transitional reading, and 3) engaging students' interests through reading in the content areas.

Combating Reading Complacency

Many of our sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students are weak in reading ability and so choose simply to not read at all. The students read poorly, choose not to read, and become increasingly unable to read grade-level material as they progress through school — a vicious cycle. Students who have reached middle school either unable or unwilling to read are at risk of school failure, because academic learning increasingly depends on effective reading skills in higher grades. Therefore it is important to break the cycle of complacency.

Christine Leland and Ruth Fitzpatrick developed a project directed at breaking this cycle for 24 at- or below-grade-level students who attended a college lab school in Massachusetts (Leland and Fitzpatrick 1994). The 24 sixth-grade students were paired with kindergarten children to read and write collaboratively on a regular basis. The result of working with a younger child was an improved attitude toward literacy on the part of the older youngster. This improved attitude helped to break the cycle of complacency, so that the older students could become re-engaged in reading.

Previously, these 24 students rarely chose to read independently, though most had the basic skills needed to do so. By placing these youngsters in the role of instructor or mentor for the kindergartners, the researchers empowered the sixth-graders. As a result, the sixth-graders developed a greater enthusiasm for reading. But they also showed improved reading ability and an awakened interest in independent, pleasure reading. Both older and younger students enjoyed working together and found the reading and writing connection to be mutually rewarding.

Leland and Fitzpatrick's study also reflects the need for freedom of choice in reading matter. When students were allowed this freedom, they developed more appreciation for reading and grew closer to becoming lifelong learners.

This study holds some clues for developing an MI approach that will yield similar benefits. Following are suggestions for reading-related activities to overcome complacency. They are grouped under the MI categories.

Verbal/Linguistic:

- Engage in storytelling, using original, paraphrased, or verbatim oral renderings of familiar children's stories.
- Write a story that follows the theme of an oral story or create a new plot.
- Write or draw journals about books that have been read.

Logical/Mathematical:

- Create a calendar of events as they happen in a story.
- Categorize types of things presented in a story, such as vegetables or animals.

Visual/Spatial:

- Draw posters or pictures about stories that were read.
- Paint murals depicting the sequence of the story.
- Map story characters or events.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

- Perform a play for younger children, telling familiar stories or fairy tales.
- Create flannel-board stories for younger children's use.

Musical:

- Sing nursery rhymes to familiar tunes.
- Write songs to accompany a poem or story.

Interpersonal:

- Organize group activities, such as producing a play.

- Use choral readings that involve cooperation to read a poem or a story by taking parts.

Intrapersonal:

- Provide for individual choice of reading materials.
- Allow free-reading time.
- Keep a journal of reading events.

Using Narrative Texts in Transitional Reading

When questioned, middle school students prefer to use narrative texts over standard textbooks. Narrative texts have special value to middle school students because they address the transitional reading stage that these students are experiencing. Often middle school students have most of the necessary skills to read but lack a broad base of experiences from which to develop meaning. Narrative texts use the familiar story organization and offer needed description and details and so hold students' interest while they enlarge the students' experience (Smith and Jackson 1993).

Different narrative texts can be used for different purposes. For example, poetry offers language stimulation and humor or new perspectives on many subjects. Picture books should not be discounted for use with middle school students. They offer ease of reading for remedial or reluctant readers that can stimulate further interest and sharpen skills. Many of today's picture books offer the middle school student a new insight to the world. Good examples are *The Polar Express, Strega*

Nona, and *A Chair for My Mother*. (The books mentioned in this section also are listed in the Resources section at the end of this fastback.)

Picture books and discussions relating to them offer stimuli for visual, linguistic, and logical learners. Kinesthetic learners can be brought in through active role-playing or drama. Musical learners can be taught through setting thoughts to song or providing background music during the study of a book. Interpersonal learners become more engaged through group discussion or drama. And intrapersonal learners can be encouraged through writing dialogue to go with the picture books.

Traditional forms of literature — myths, ballads, and legends — offer students a picture of the world as it was when people were struggling to understand nature and the spiritual world. They give students a connection to the past that contains elements of fact and imagination. Popular subjects for use with middle school students include Hercules, Jason and the Golden Fleece, Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, and Aesop's fables. Modern fantasies, such as *Charlotte's Web* and *James and the Giant Peach*, also allow students to let their imaginations expand.

Realistic fiction allows students to deal with situations they face in life by reading about someone else who faced similar challenges. Examples of realistic fiction include books by Beverly Cleary and Elaine Konigsburg.

Likewise, historical fiction can bring history to life for middle school students. A story such as *Johnny Tremain* makes students feel as though they are part of the American Revolution.

Many high-quality nonfiction books are written in narrative form to interest middle school students. The

illustrations and story lines make facts anything but dull. There also are many multicultural books available today that help middle school students develop empathy for and an understanding of other cultures. Picture books, too, can be used to present the vast diversity of cultures, as well as their underlying similarities.

Often, narrative texts can be used to develop a thematic unit. In developing such a unit, the teacher should:

1. Identify the theme using a student-interest survey and choose literature with student input.
2. Make certain that the chosen literature is age- and theme-appropriate.
3. Use brainstorming to determine the learning activities to be used for the unit.
4. Develop instructional strategies that incorporate the activities to achieve necessary skill development.
5. Determine evaluation criteria with students before beginning the unit.

Following are suggestions of learning activities to incorporate an MI approach to using narrative texts. As in the previous section, they are grouped under the MI categories.

Verbal/Linguistic:

- Discuss the relationship of the stories to the unit theme.
- Write stories that follow the same theme as a studied work.

- Write journals about books that were read and how they applied to the student.

Logical/Mathematical:

- Make a timeline of the events of a book or of history that affected what happened in the book.
- Conduct conflict resolution exercises using story events.

Visual/Spatial:

- Draw posters or pictures about stories that were read.
- Paint a mural depicting the characters or sequence of events in a story.
- Map story characters or events.
- Videotape acted scenes from a book.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

- Depict scenes from a book through movement or dance.
- Role play different characters in a book.
- Create a game following the plot sequence of a story.

Musical:

- Write a song to describe the time period of the story or book.
- Discuss a popular opera or musical story line and then show students a video of the opera (Example: *Phantom of the Opera*).

Interpersonal:

- Conduct a class meeting as if the students were characters in the book.

- Orally read passages from the book using the expression of the characters.

Intrapersonal:

- Allow individual choice of reading material.
- Provide for free-reading time.
- Use journal writing to describe feelings about a book or a specific character.

Other ideas for active teaching through the use of narrative texts are available in many series of commercially prepared activities. An awareness of the seven intelligences can shed new light on these instructional materials.

Engaging Students' Interests Through Reading in the Content Areas

If a story or a book is about a subject in which students are interested, such as history or science, they become more enthusiastic about reading (Bristor 1994). Reading must be relevant or have a purpose to have a value for most students. This also is true of the strategies that teachers use to study reading. One reason that cooperative learning groups are valuable for studying reading with middle school students is that the students at this age need and value social involvement.

Following are suggested activities for engaging students' interests through reading in the content areas. Of course, there are many more activities that might be used, but these examples should provide a starting point for thinking about this instructional strategy. As

in the preceding sections, the ideas are grouped under the MI categories.

Verbal/Linguistic:

- Use fiction and nonfiction books on the subject being discussed, either through teacher presentation or individual reading. For example, *The Magic School Bus Inside the Body* (Cole 1987) could be read and discussed during a unit on the body in science class.
- Discuss text information to bring to light main idea, context clues, cause and effect, punctuation, and other requirements to meet language arts objectives.
- Write stories, both fiction and nonfiction, about what students learned through the study of the subject.

Logical/Mathematical:

- Explain the logic of activities or the relationship of information gathered to the subject of the unit.
- Use a game to show the strategy of a historic battle.

Visual/Spatial:

- Make maps, charts, and graphs to explain math, history, and science skills.
- Show videos that explain the concepts under study.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

- Do hands-on activities before reading to bring life to vocabulary. For example, make a model of

the respiratory system that will show how the lungs and diaphragm work together.

Musical:

- Musically interpret an event, such as a war, the creation of earth, or geometric figures through song or dance.

Interpersonal:

- Write a group book on the subject matter with chapters developed by individuals in the group.

Intrapersonal:

- Create a journal that brings the topic to life, such as "If I were a Civil War soldier" or "How the development of genetic research might affect me."

There are many ways to incorporate reading in the content areas of the middle school. For example, math, science, history, and language arts can be taught through the use of newspapers. Most larger newspapers participate in the Newspaper in Education program to help teachers. A call to the local newspaper is all that is needed to investigate this possibility.

An MI curriculum using drama to present content information also can be successful in bringing a content area to life. If a teacher has the desire to actively involve the students in learning, then drama is a great way to do so. Drama, using student-written or teacher-written plays based on fiction or nonfiction books related to the subject, can be structured to incorporate all seven intelligences. For example, if students are studying slavery, then instruction might include activities based on Turner's book, *Take a Walk in Their Shoes*.

Both group and individual participation can make this unit active learning for all students. Teaching ideas include:

- Set the stage for the book by dividing the class into half.
- Talk about how people judge others and how judgments often exclude others.
- Have students choose labels that they feel best describes them, such as "smooth" or "rough," "steak" or "pizza," "day" or "night."
- Use discussion to tie the various activities to the theme of prejudice.
- Use role playing to understand different cultures.

Other suggestions for a successful middle school reading program include: partner reading (interpersonal); transforming text to another expressive form (linguistics, kinesthetic, music, visual, logical); and journal writing (intrapersonal). A special reading space in the middle school classroom offering a wide selection of books and plenty of time to enjoy them also is an essential part of the successful reading program.

Reading aloud, which can be presented through methods that stimulate linguistic, kinesthetic, and musical learners, is suggested for use with students who have fluency problems. Through the example of hearing fluent reading and exposure to interesting stories, a student will be able to increase his or her reading ability. Oral reading also is an important method of developing appreciation, a sense of cultural literacy, vocabulary, and thinking strategies. Other MI strategies can be incorporated

with oral reading through discussion, art, role playing, and music.

Conclusion

Our ability to read distinguishes us as human beings. It opens our culture to new ideas and keeps us connected with the past. Today a person who cannot read is almost unemployable and is removed from many activities in our society. As educators, we cannot allow our students to pass through our classes without developing effective reading skills.

Many of our students see no value in reading because there are many other avenues from which they can gather information. Yet not a day goes by that they do not need the skill of reading. We must connect the act of reading to their lives by making reading inviting and relevant.

The successful reading program at the middle school level is one that incorporates many of the techniques that have been used in elementary instruction. But it must go further, especially for students who have not yet achieved success in learning to read. A successful middle school reading program also will teach content areas and literature, both fiction and nonfiction, through active participation in drama, art, music, personal expression, cooperative learning, and individual

writing. It will offer a multiple intelligences curriculum so that all students are taught through their preferred learning style to become lifelong readers and learners.

Resources

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George H. Reavis (1883-1970) entered the education profession after graduating from Warrensburg Missouri State Teachers College in 1906 and the University of Missouri in 1911. He went on to earn an M.A. and a Ph.D. at Columbia University. Dr. Reavis served as assistant superintendent of schools in Maryland and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1929 he was appointed director of instruction for the Ohio State Department of Education. But it was as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the Cincinnati public schools (1939-48) that he rose to national prominence.

Dr. Reavis' dream for the Educational Foundation was to make it possible for seasoned educators to write and publish the wisdom they had acquired over a lifetime of professional activity. He wanted educators and the general public to "better understand (1) the nature of the educative process and (2) the relation of education to human welfare."

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